Response to Comments of FBI Chief

By Jack Anderson

J. Edgar Hoover, the beloved old bulldog of the FBI, has just bared his fangs at us.

"There is not enough stationery at our headquarters, nor are there enough hours in the workweek, to issue public denials of all the misinformation which this purveyor of fiction has written regarding the FBI," growled Hoover.

So the American people can judge for themselves who is feeding them fiction, we invite the FBI chief to present his facts to an appropriate congressional committee, and we will present our evidence. The loser should agree in advance to retire.

Here are the main charges we have made against Hoover and are now prepared to prove:

1. We will show that Hoover has collected more than $250,000 in royalties from three books researched and ghostwritten for him by FBI personnel on government time. This includes a reported $50,000 that Warner Brothers paid him for the movie rights to his book, "Masters of Deceit," which has never been made into a movie. He distributed most of his profits to the FBI recreational fund and to the FBI people who wrote his book. But he kept a generous share for himself.

Free Suite

2. We will prove that Hoover, accompanied by his faithful companion Clyde Tolson, used to spend their summer vacations in $100-a-day suites at the Hotel Del Charro so the FBI chief could attend the nearby Del Mar race track. We would want to subpoena Texas oil millionaire Clint Murchison, Jr., the hotel owner, who told us the hotel always picked up the FBI pair's bills. We will also take the testimony of the hotel manager, Alan Witwer, who told us while he was there Hoover ran up more than $15,000 in bills which were paid by Murchison.

3. We will present evidence that the FBI chief, contrary to his public statements, has assigned agents to nail members of congress. Among those who have been kept under surveillance by Hoover's gumshoes are Rep. Cornelius Gallagher (D-N.J.), Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) and ex-Rep. Roland Libonati (D-Ill.). We will show that agents have also checked on the activities of other members, including Speaker Carl Albert, House Democratic leader Hale Boggs and House Republican leader Gerald Ford. We will prove that the FBI has kept tabs on still other prominent Americans, including ex-Attorney Ramsey Clark and the late Dr. Martin Luther King. We will cite a Feb. 20, 1968 memo, for example, that Hoover sent to the White House about Dr. King's sex life.

4. We will back up our original charge that the FBI chief has kept as many as five bulletproof limousines at one time stashed around the country for his personal use. This is more bulletproof transportation than the taxpayers provide for the President. A check of the mileage run up by these FBI limousines will show that, except for occasional drives to keep them in running condition, they have been held for Hoover's use.

Twisting the Law

5. We will show how Hoover twisted the law to keep his inseparable companion, Clyde Tolson, on the payroll as the FBI's No. 2 man. The two old friends have been lunching, dining and vacationing together for years. When Tolson reached the mandatory 70-year-old retirement age in May, 1970, his health was too poor to get a waiver. So Hoover arranged for him to "retire," then come back to the FBI as a "re-employable annuiant" under a provision that allows over-age employees to complete their unfinished work.

6. In his latest blast at us, as published in The Washington Post, Hoover calls us irresponsible for reporting he assigned only four agents to the Justice Department's vital, 17-city drive against the Mafia. Despite the FBI's refusal to answer our inquiries, we noted that the FBI helps out the strike forces without direct assignments and conducts its own separate Mafia investigations. We will produce a 19-page Justice Department document, which completely confirms our story.

7. Of all the charges we have made against Hoover, he chose also to deny our story that agent Kenneth Lovin was disciplined for not wearing his jacket at a shoot-out at New York's Kennedy International Airport. Hoover stated indignantly that he commended Lovin and gave him a cash award for killing Richard Obergfell, an armed hijacker. Thus Hoover denied a story that Lovin, when we gave him the opportunity, refused to deny. We not only will stand by our story, but we will prevent evidence that Hoover's Boy Scout rules and use of FBI agents to investigate the most minor infractions of FBI employees have hampered law enforcement.

From the first, we have emphasized that Hoover has built up the FBI until it has a reputation unmatched by any law enforcement agency in the world. But we have suggested, sadly at first, more firmly later, that the time has passed when the nation should have paid Hoover his final measure of praise and replaced him.

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